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Message Text

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ACTION EUR-10

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E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PFOR, PINT, SP, VT
SUBJECT: SPANISH-VATICAN RELATIONS ENTERING NEW PHASE

REF: ROME 12538; MADRID 6632, 6490.

SUMMARY: FEELING THERE NO PRUDENT ALTERNATIVE, VATICAN HAS DECIDED TO RESUME DISCUSSIONS WITH GOS IN EFFORT TO UPDATE 1953 CONCORDAT. DURING NEGOTIATING PROCESS VATICAN WILL REMAIN IN CLOSE CONTACT WITH SPANISH HIERARCHY, WHOSE VIEWS WILL BE SCRUPULOUSLY RESPECTED. END SUMMARY.

1. DUE TO ARCHBISHOP CASAROLI'S PRESSING SCHEDULE, ILLING WAS ABLE TO HAVE ONLY BRIEF DISCUSSION WITH HIM NOV 21 CONCERNING HIS VISIT TO SPAIN AND VIEWS ON NEXT PHASE SPANISH-VATICAN RELATIONS. CASAROLI SAID THAT FOLLOWING UNSECCESSFUL ATTEMPTS TO RENEGOTIATE OR UPDATE 1953 CONCORDAT WITH AMB GARRIGUES, HOLY SEE WAS HOPEFUL THAT WHOLE QUESTION COULD BE LEFT SUSPENDED UNTIL POST-FRANCO PERIOD WHEN IT HOPED CONDITIONS FOR NEGOTIATING NEW AGREEMENT MIGHT BE MORE PROPITIOUS. RECENTLY, HOWEVER, IT HAS BECOME MORE AND MORE OBVIOUS TO HOLY SEE THAT, FOR ALL PRACTICAL PURPOSES, POST-FRANCO PERIOD HAS ALREADY BEGUN AND LIKELIHOOD OF VATICAN OBTAINING BETTER BARGAIN FOLLOWING FRANCO'S DEATH SEEMS MORE REMOTE THAN ONE WOULD HAVE SURMISED TWO YEARS AGO. HOWEVER, MOST IMPORTANT ELEMENT IS THAT GOS HAS ASSUMED MORE INTRANSIGENT POSTURE TOWARD
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VATICAN, AND SPANISH OFFICIALS ARE INSISTING VERY CONVINCINGLY,

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INCLUDING WITH VEILED THREATS, THAT VATICAN MUST RETURN TO NEGOT-
IATING TABLE. WHEN ASKED WHETHER HOLY SEE THOUGHT SPANIARDS WERE
SERIOUS IN THEIR VEILED THREATS, CASAROLI REMARKED THAT "THEIR
WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS DISPLAY GREAT DETERMINATION. ONE CAN ONLY
GUESS WHAT REALLY LIES IN THEIR HEARTS." THERE NO DOUBT, HE
ADDED, THAT FROM VATICAN'S VIEWPOINT SITUATION HAS ENTERED A
SERIOUS IMPASSE WHICH BLOCKING FURTHER APPOINTMENT OF BISHOPS IN
SPAIN, AND GOS SHOWING GREATER TRUCULENCE THAN AT ANY TIME IN
RECENT PAST.

2. CASAROLI SAID HE HAD AGREED TO VISIT MADRID FOR SHORT, STRICTLY
WORKING STOPOVER ON HIS RETURN FROM US ON CONDITION GOS WOULD
GIVE IT NO ATTENTION OR PUBLICITY. ON ARRIVAL AT AIRPORT, HOW-
EVER, CASAROLI WAS DEEPLY DISTRESSED TO FIND MOTORCYCLE ESCORT
AND CAR WITH FLAGS AWAITING HIM. ON HIS RETURN TO ROME HE WAS
FURTHER ANNOYED TO LEARN OF HEAVY SPANISH PRESS COVERAGE OF
VISIT. IN REACTION, HE CALLED IN SPANISH MINISTER MARTINEZ DE MATA
AND PROTESTED THIS EGREGIOUS VIOLATION OF GOS ASSURANCES THAT
VISIT WOULD BE LOW-KEY.

3. CASAROLI SAID THAT THERE WAS NO POSSIBILITY OF NEGOTIATING
A NEW CONCORDAT, WHICH ENTIRELY UNACCEPTABLE TO SPANISH HIER-
ARCHY. IDEA OF NEGOTIATING INDIVIDUAL AGREEMENTS TO COVER MAJOR
POINTS OF DIFFERENCE, POSSIBLY BEST SOLUTION, WAS UNFORTUNATELY
TOTALLY UNACCEPTABLE TO GSO. THEREFORE, PRESENT PLAN IS TO AT-
TEMPT AN UPDATING OF 1953 CONCORDAT. IN JURIDICAL TERMSN, RESULTS,
IF THERE ARE ANY, WOULD BE NO DIFFERENT THAN INDIVIDUAL AGREE-
MENTS DESIRED BY SPANISH BISHOPS, ALTHOUGH FOR DOMESTIC SPANISH
PURPOSES INDIVIDUAL AGREEMENTS PROBABLY WOULD LOOK BETTER. IN ANY
CASE, CASAROLI SAID, FINAL PRODUCT, IF ACHIEVED, WOULD RECEIVE
COSMETIC LABEL "1953 CONCORDAT WITH AMENDMENTS," IN REPLY TO
QUESTION OF WHETHER HOLY SEE EVER CONSIDERED BREAKING WITH TRADI-
TION AND LETTING LOCAL HIERARCHY NEGOTIATE DIRECTLY WITH GOS ON
RENNOVATION OF CONCORDAT, HE SAID HE FEARED THIS WOULD BE DISAS-
TROUS AS SPANISH BISHOPS WERE NOT AGREED ON WHAT THEY WANT AND,
THROWN INTO NEGOTIATIONS WITH GOVT, THEY WOULD SPLIT SERIOUSLY
AND BE AT MERCY OF GOS. MOREOVER, CASAROLI NOTED THAT IN PRIVATE
BISHOPS EXPRESS MUCH LESS CONCERN ABOUT VATICAN NEGOTIATING WITH
GOS AT THIS TIME THAN THEY DO IN PUBLIC.

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4. CASAROLI SAID IT HAS BEEN DECIDED TO DISCUSS ALL POINTS AT
SAME TIME RATHER THAN TO CONSIDER EACH POINT SEPARATELY. HE GAVE
NO INDICATION OF WHO WOULD BE HOLY SEE NEGOTIATOR, BUT DID MENTION
THAT GOS WOULD HAVE TO SEND NEW, HIGHLY SKILLED, EXPERIENCED
DIPLOMAT AS AMBASSADOR TO HOLY SEE. AMB LOJENDIO HAS BEEN IN
HOSPITAL IN MORIBUND STATE FOR ALMOST TWO MONTHS AS RESULT OF
SEVERE HEART ATTACK.

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5. ARCHBISHOP BENELLI (VATICAN DEP SECSTATE) INFORMED CANADIAN AMB TO HOLY SEE LAST SATURDAY THAT HE SAW LITTLE HOPE IN COMING TO AGREEMENT ON MAJOR PROBLEMS WITH GOS. BENELLI ASSURED AMB THAT HOLY SEE HAD NO INTENTION WHATSOEVER OF IGNORING VIEWS OF SPANISH BISHOPS. NEXT ROUND OF TALKS, HE SAID, WOULD AT BEST PROBABLY JUST GAIN TIME FOR CHURCH. VOLPE

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